



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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NO KIDDING, COUNTY PUTS GOATS ON WEED CONTROL *Four-legged Lawnmowers to Feast on Weeds in the San Pasqual Valley*

Goats conditioned to eat perennial pepperweed, a highly invasive weed, will start grazing on 75 acres of weed-infested land in the San Pasqual Valley Agricultural Preserve during the first week of May. The herd of 250 of "nature's lawnmowers" is part of a trial effort to determine the usefulness and practicality of this method and applications for other weed-infested areas. County Agricultural Commissioner Kathleen Thuner anticipates success: "Goats have been a successful component in effectively controlling this weed in other counties."

Perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) can infest agricultural land, irrigated landscapes, and areas along streams. Native to southern Europe and western Asia, this weed is a member of the mustard family which develops thick roots that can reach more than six feet deep. Because of this extensive root system, this plant is very difficult to control. Agricultural yields are reduced when this weed competes with crops. The plant transports salts to the soil surface, altering growing conditions and inhibiting the growth of native plants. Organically farmed areas have few control options against this aggressive weed and streamside vegetation is displaced, compromising native habitats.

The task of controlling perennial pepperweed is one of the goals of the San Diego Weed Management Area (SDWMA), a coalition of local governments, regulatory agencies, conservation organizations, and other affected stakeholders. Weed Management Area members extensively reviewed the goat trial proposal to ensure the best chances of success.

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